

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSC-01 EURE-00 /053 W
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O R 221625Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0841

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 02980

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UK. PINT

SUBJECT: CABINET RESHUFFLE FEBRUARY 21

REF: LONDON 2923

1. IN A SURPRISE MOVE THAT HAS CAUGHT THE IMAGINATION
OF POLITICAL PUNDITS AND PLEASED HIS OWN BACKBENCHERS.
PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN ANNOUNCED LATE YESTERDAY THE
ELEVATION OF DR. DAVID OWEN. CROSLAND'S DEPUTY. TO BE THE
NEW FOREIGN SECRETARY. AT 38, OWEN IS THE YOUNGEST MAN
TO HOLD THAT POSITION SINCE ANTHONY EDEN WAS APPOINTED
IN 1935. HE WILL RANK FIFTH IN THE CABINET BEHIND
CALLAGHAN, FOOT, ELWYN-JONES, AND HEALEY. (WE ARE RE-
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PEATING TO ALL INFO ADDRESSEES A BIOGRAPHIC UPDATE ON
OWEN THAT WE RECENTLY SENT TO THE DEPARTMENT.)

2. CALLAGHAN ALSO APPOINTED JOEL BARNETT, THE NUMBER
TWO MAN AT THE TREASURY, TO THE CABINET, THEREBY IN-
CREASING ITS SIZE TO 24. BARNETT, AGED 53, WILL CARRY
INTO CABINET HIS CURRENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PUBLIC

EXPENDITURE UNDER AN ARRANGEMENT DESIGNED TO TAKE SOME OF THE WORKLOAD OFF CHANCELLOR HEALEY. HEALEY, STYMIED BY EVENTS BEYOND HIS CONTROL FROM REALIZING HIS LONG-CHERISHED DESIRE TO BE FOREIGN SECRETARY, -- AT LEAST THIS SIDE OF A GENERAL ELECTION -- WILL PRESENT THE NEXT BUDGET ON MARCH 29 AND CONTINUE TO SHOULDER THE MAIN BURDEN OF NEGOTIATING A THIRD ROUND OF PAY RESTRAINT WITH THE TRADE UNIONS.

3. TO REPLACE OWEN AS NUMBER TWO AT THE FCO, CALLAGHAN APPOINTED FRANK JUDD, WHO HAD REPLACED REG PRENTICE AS MINISTER OF OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT ONLY LAST DECEMBER AND INTO THAT OFFICE HE RETURNED MRS. JUDITH HART WHO HAS HELD IT TWICE BEFORE.

4. COMMENT: SO CALLAGHAN REVERTED TO THE YOUNG LOCHINVAR OPTION AFTER ALL (REFTEL). ACCORDING TO HIS POLITICAL ADVISOR, HE WAS PERSUADED BY THREE FACTORS: 1) OWEN'S OBVIOUS INTELLIGENCE AND ABILITY, AND PARTICULARLY THE EASY, SELF-ASSURED MANNER IN WHICH ON SHORT NOTICE HE TOOK OVER CROSLAND'S DUTIES LAST WEEK; 2) A GENERAL DESIRE TO BRING FORTH AND GROOM A GENERATION OF LEADERS FOR THE 1980'S; 3) A NEED TO GIVE HIS INCREASINGLY GREY AND TIRED-LOOKING CABINET SOME SEX APPEAL (OWEN HAS MOVIE STAR GOOD LOOKS AND CHARM TO MATCH). FOR OWEN, OF COURSE, THE MOVE OPENS DIZZYING PROSPECTS; IT SHOULD ALSO HELP HIM TO RETAIN HIS MARGINAL PARLIAMENTARY SEAT AGAINST AN EXPECTED SWING TO THE CONSERVATIVES AT THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION.
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5. THE ELEVATION OF BARNETT TO THE CABINET MOVES ITS

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 02980

CENTER OF GRAVITY YET ANOTHER NOTCH TO THE RIGHT, AND STRENGTHENS HEALEY'S HAND ON CRITICAL ECONOMIC POLICY QUESTIONS. IT ALSO GIVES HEALEY THE CACHET OF BEING THE ONLY CABINET MEMBER TO HAVE ANOTHER CABINET MEMBER AS HIS DEPUTY -- A DISTINCTION ENJOYED BY CROSLAND UNTIL PRENTICE RESIGNED IN DECEMBER.

6. CALLAGHAN'S DECISION TO RESCUE JUDITH HART FROM WELL-DESERVED POLITICAL OBSCURITY WAS PROMPTED BY SEVERAL CONSIDERATIONS. FOR ONE THING, IT IS A SOP TO THE LEFT.

VOICES ON THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE THAT HAVE
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PROVED SO TRYING TO THE PRIME MINISTER. FINALLY, IT RESTORES TO THE MINISTRY FOR OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENTS (ODM) A MINISTER WHO DEMONSTRATED, DURING HER PREVIOUS TWO STINTS, AN EXCEPTIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE ABILITY AND A SINGULAR COMMITMENT TO FOREIGN AID. AT THE SAME TIME, SHE RETURNS TO A MINISTRY THAT IS NO LONGER INDEPENDENT AS IT WAS WHEN SHE TOOK IT OVER IN 1974, BUT IS LODGED WITHIN THE FCO. MRS. HART, FOR HER PART, CAN ONLY BE GRATEFUL. SHE DID NOT EXPECT WILSON TO CALL HER RESIGNATION BLUFF IN 1975 AND HAS BEEN IN POLITICAL LIMBO EVER SINCE, REDUCED TO ADDRESSING RENT-A-CROWD RALLIES ON ANY LEFT-WING CAUSE THAT COMES ALONG. HER PARLIAMENTARY SEAT IS UNDER SIEGE FROM THE SCOTTISH NATIONALISTS, AND SHE WILL HAVE TO BE VERY LUCKY TO

SURVIVE THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION.

7. JUDD, AGED 41, ALSO HOLDS A MARGINAL SEAT. A CENTRIST WITH AN OCCASIONAL PENCHANT FOR LEFT-WING CAUSES, HE SERVED AS PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE NAVY BEFORE COMING TO ODM. IN THE PAST HE HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY ARDENT IN SUPPORT OF AFRICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS. HIS NEW JOB SHOULD GIVE HIM MORE SCOPE FOR INFLUENCING HMG OOLICY IN THAT REGARD.

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